

He was elected the 20th Governor of Wisconsin in 1900. He served in that office until 1906, when he stepped down in order to serve the people of Wisconsin in the Senate, where he remained until his death in 1925.

As a founder of the national progressive movement, La Follette championed progressive causes as Governor of Wisconsin and in the Congress. As Governor, he advanced an agenda that included the country's first workers' compensation system, direct election of Senators, and railroad rate and tax reforms. Collectively, these reforms would become known as the "Wisconsin Idea." As Governor, La Follette also supported cooperation between the State and the University of Wisconsin.

His terms in the House of Representatives and the Senate were spent fighting for women's rights, working to limit the power of monopolies, and opposing pork-barrel legislation. La Follette also advocated electoral reforms, and he brought his support of the direct election of Senators to this body. His efforts were brought to fruition with the ratification of the 17th amendment in 1913. Fighting Bob also worked tirelessly to hold the Government accountable and was a key figure in exposing the Teapot Dome scandal.

La Follette earned the respect of such notable Americans as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington and Harriet Tubman Upton for making civil rights one of his trademark issues. At a speech before the 1886 graduating class of Howard University, La Follette said:

We are one people, one by truth, one almost by blood. Our lives run side by side, our ashes rest in the same soil. [Seize] the waiting world of opportunity. Separatism is snobbish stupidity, it is supreme folly, to talk of non-contact, or exclusion!

La Follette ran for President three times, twice as a Republican and once on the Progressive ticket. In 1924, as the Progressive candidate for President, La Follette garnered more than 17 percent of the popular vote and carried the State of Wisconsin.

La Follette's years of public service were not without controversy. In 1917, he filibustered a bill to allow the arming of U.S. merchant ships in response to a series of German submarine attacks. His filibuster was successful in blocking passage of this bill in the closing hours of the 64th Congress. Soon after, La Follette was one of only six Senators who voted against U.S. entry into World War I.

Fighting Bob was outspoken in his belief that the right to free speech did not end when war began. In the fall of 1917, La Follette gave a speech about the war in Minnesota, and he was misquoted in press reports as saying that he supported the sinking of the *Lusitania*. The Wisconsin State Legislature condemned his supposed statement as treason, and some of La Follette's Senate colleagues introduced a resolution to expel him. In response to this action, he delivered his seminal floor ad-

dress, "Free Speech in Wartime," on October 16, 1917. If you listen closely, you can almost hear his strong voice echoing through this chamber as he said:

Mr. President, our government, above all others, is founded on the right of the people freely to discuss all matters pertaining to their government, in war not less than in peace, for in this government, the people are the rulers in war no less than in peace.

Of the expulsion petition filed against him, La Follette said:

I am aware, Mr. President, that in pursuance of this general campaign of vilification and attempted intimidation, requests from various individuals and certain organizations have been submitted to the Senate for my expulsion from this body, and that such requests have been referred to and considered by one of the Committees of the Senate.

If I alone had been made the victim of these attacks, I should not take one moment of the Senate's time for their consideration, and I believe that other Senators who have been unjustly and unfairly assailed, as I have been, hold the same attitude upon this that I do. Neither the clamor of the mob nor the voice of power will ever turn me by the breadth of a hair from the course I mark out for myself, guided by such knowledge as I can obtain and controlled and directed by a solemn conviction of right and duty.

This powerful speech led to a Senate investigation of whether La Follette's conduct constituted treason. In 1919, following the end of World War I, the Senate dropped its investigation and reimbursed La Follette for the legal fees he incurred as a result of the expulsion petition and corresponding investigation. This incident is indicative of Fighting Bob's commitment to his ideals and of his tenacious spirit.

La Follette died on June 18, 1925, in Washington, DC, while serving Wisconsin in this body. His daughter noted, "His passing was mysteriously peaceful for one who had stood so long on the battle line." Mourners visited the Wisconsin Capitol to view his body and paid respects in a crowd nearing 50,000 people. La Follette's son, Robert M. La Follette, Jr., was appointed to his father's seat and went on to be elected in his own right and to serve in this body for more than 20 years, following the progressive path blazed by his father.

La Follette has been honored a number of times for his unwavering commitment to his ideals and for his service to the people of Wisconsin and of the United States.

During the 109th Congress, I was proud to support Senate passage of a bill introduced in the House of Representatives by Congresswoman TAMMY BALDWIN that named the post office at 215 Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard in Madison in La Follette's honor. I commend Congresswoman BALDWIN for her efforts to pass that bill, and I am pleased she is introducing House companion measures of the legislation I am introducing today in the Senate.

The Library of Congress recognized La Follette in 1985 by naming the Congressional Research Service reading room in the Madison Building in honor

of both Fighting Bob and his son, Robert M. La Follette, Jr., for their shared commitment to the development of a legislative research service to support the Congress. In his autobiography, Fighting Bob noted that, as Governor of Wisconsin, he:

made it a . . . policy to bring all the reserves of knowledge and inspiration of the university more fully to the service of the people. . . . Many of the university staff are now in state service, and a bureau of investigation and research established as a legislative reference library . . . has proved of the greatest assistance to the legislature in furnishing the latest and best thought of the advanced students of government in this and other countries.

He went on to call this service "a model which the federal government and ultimately every state in the union will follow." Thus, the legislative reference service that La Follette created in Madison served as the basis for his work to create the Congressional Research Service at the Library of Congress.

The La Follette Reading Room was dedicated on March 5, 1985, the 100th anniversary of Fighting Bob being sworn in for his first term as a Member of Congress.

Across this magnificent Capitol in National Statuary Hall, Fighting Bob is forever immortalized in white marble, still proudly representing the State of Wisconsin. His statue resides in the Old House Chamber, now known as National Statuary Hall, among those of other notable figures who have made their marks in American history. One of the few seated statues is that of Fighting Bob. Though he is sitting, he is shown with one foot forward, and one hand on the arm of his chair, as if he is about to leap to his feet and begin a robust speech.

When then-Senator John F. Kennedy's five-member Special Committee on the Senate Reception Room chose La Follette as one of the "Five Outstanding Senators" whose portraits would hang outside of this chamber in the Senate reception room, he was described as being a "ceaseless battler for the underprivileged" and a "courageous independent." Today, his painting still hangs just outside this chamber, where it bears witness to the proceedings of this body—and, perhaps, challenges his successors here to continue fighting for the social and Government reforms he championed.

Mr. President, to honor Robert M. La Follette, Sr., during the week of the anniversary of his birth, today I am introducing two pieces of legislation. I am pleased to be joined in this effort by the senior Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. KOHL; the senior Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. KENNEDY; and the junior Senator from Ohio, Mr. BROWN.

I am introducing a bill that would direct the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins to commemorate Fighting Bob's life and legacy. The second bill that I am introducing today would authorize the President to posthumously award a gold medal on behalf of Congress to Robert M. La Follette, Sr. The